

bicoloured tail which was identified as the Fawn-coloured Mouse, *Mus cervicolor cervicolor* Hodgson.

According to authoritative literature this species occurs within the Indian limits in southern India, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh but it has not yet been reported from the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and the present material constitutes the first authentic record of its occurrence in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, India.

The details of the specimen are given below. The external measurements were taken in the field by the collector. All measurements are given in millimetres.

Material. 1 adult ♀; Z.S.I. Registration Number 21113; in alcohol; Wrightmyo, South Andaman Island, Andaman and Nicobar Islands; 10 April 1975; P. K. Das Collector; deposited in the National Zoological Collection of India, housed at the Zoological Survey of India, Calcutta.

Measurements. External: Head and body 89; tail 89.5; hindfoot 17; ear 13.

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8, LINDSAY STREET,
CALCUTTA-700 087,
January 22, 1984.

Cranial: Occipitonasal 22.3; condylobasal 21.0; nasal 8.4; palate 11.3; bulla 3.6; molar tooth row 3.4; anterior palatal foramen 5.1; diastema 6.0.

The tail is usually shorter than the head and body length in *Mus cervicolor*, but three out of the four examples of this sub-species from Nepal have the tail longer (Ellerman, 1961). In the above-mentioned example from the Andamans, the tail is more or less equal to the head and body length.

The specimen was trapped outside the kitchen of the Forest Rest House at Wrightmyo, South Andaman Island.

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AJOY KUMAR MANDAL
M. K. GHOSH

7. A LARGE FLOCK OF MIGRATING WHITE STORKS

On 8.i.1981 at about 2.00 p.m. while returning from Kalakad to Palayamkottai, I saw an unusually large assemblage of white storks (*Ciconia ciconia*) on either side of the road from Kalakad to Nanguneri east of hamlet Subramaniapuram.

There had been some recent showers. The ground and grass were wet. The area consisted of fallow fields. On the north of the road are the hillocks, where A. J. T. Johnsingh studied Indian Fox and a small rain fed irrigation tank.

Sheep, goats, buffaloes and cattle were grazing to make it a perfect pastoral setting. The white storks are not uncommon or unknown in this area as it has been described in Tamil Sangam Literature said to be 3000 years in age.

Near scientific descriptions of its looks, migratory habits and habitat have been recorded by the Tamil Poet Sakthimuttar, The lines "*Pazhampadu Panayin kilangu Pилanthanna pavala kurvai sengal narai*" refer to the commissure of the beak which looks like the cleft

on the palmyrah seedling, coral coloured sharp beak and red legs. But what is uncommon is the large numbers seen. Salim Ali in his THE BOOK OF INDIAN BIRDS states that it is a winter visitor in small numbers. I counted them dividing the area into smaller sections based on the land marks and counting in the direction opposite to their general movement they turned out to be 360+. They were foraging and moving in a generally southerly direction.

WILDLIFE WARDEN,
MUDUMALAI WILDLIFE SANCTUARY,
TEMPLETON COTTAGE, VANNARPET,
UDHAGAMANDALAM-643 001,
TAMIL NADU,
March 3, 1982.

Another striking characteristic was the spacing between adjacent individuals which was about 8-10 m. The spacing was consistent when two birds moved too close, one flew to the nearest opening available.

On enquiry from local cowherds I learnt that these birds arrived in small groups of 10 or 20, from about noon. They were unmindful of the grazing cattle. They were still foraging when I left at 4.30 p.m.

J. MANGALRAJ JOHNSON

8. PUDDLE-FEEDING OF FLAMINGOS *PHOENICOPTERUS ROSEUS* IN INLAND TANKS

In Koonthakulam (77.46 E., 8.29 N., 60 m above MSL) situated in Nanguneri Taluk, Tirunelveli District, Pelicans, Painted Storks, Little egrets, Cattle egrets, Cormorants, Night herons and Pond herons breed. The tank contains water generally between the months September and April depending on rains, letting in of water from Manimuthar and letting out of water for irrigation. The breeding generally coincides with availability of water in tanks of Koonthakulam and nearby tanks.

Flamingos (*Phoenicopterus roseus*) are seen feeding in small groups of 5 to 27, when the water is shallow. When there is heavy rainfall and tanks get filled with fresh water flamingos leave to return after 15-21 days. Now that we have taken up planting of *Acacia arabica* in the foreshores of the tank, I frequently enter the tank bed, which is partly or mostly dry and noticed that they could be approached very close as near as 30 m. It is then that I

noticed that they make a puddle with their feet continuously while feeding. The head is kept partly submerged in water or kept near the surface. They stand either very close to the edge of the water or in shallow areas where the depth of water is around 15 cm to 30 cm (as measured after the bird left). Keeping the head in the centre the legs are moved in quarter, semi- or three-quarter circles in clockwise and anticlockwise directions in slowly closing circles. While bringing the legs close to the head, the neck is bent but the head is kept in the same position continuously without lifting up the head. The puddling is effected by bending and lifting the legs and again thrusting into the tank bed ooze. While lifting legs the toes are partly closed. Flamingos found here are sometimes in breeding plumage. It has been reported earlier that Flamingos were fairly common throughout the Tirunel-